

Fact Sheet: Indonesia and the U.S. to Open| Negotiations for a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty



Public Affairs
Section

November 20, 2006

Mutual Legal Assistance agreements are “an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism, drug trafficking, and fraud and other white-collar offenses.”

-- President George W. Bush
Message to the Senate, July 15, 2002

Cooperation among law enforcement officials is essential to combating the increasingly transnational nature of today's criminal organizations. Working together, American and Indonesian police have tracked down fugitives trying to escape justice, seized money being used to smuggle drugs or finance terrorism, and uncovered the perpetrators of violent crimes.

In order to further enhance this cooperation, President Bush and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono have announced their intention to begin negotiating a Mutual Legal Assistant Treaty (MLAT).

- MLATs create a permanent mechanism to enable the law enforcement service of one signatory to request and receive information or evidence from their foreign counterparts more quickly than current ad-hoc arrangements allow.
- Law enforcement cooperation is critical to tracking criminals and crimes that cross borders. These include drug trafficking, money laundering, trafficking in persons, terrorism and cybercrime.
- A Joint Task Force between the FBI and Indonesian authorities apprehended seven suspects in the murders of two American citizens and one Indonesian in Papua, Indonesia in 2002. The seven individuals were eventually convicted.
- In 2004, email evidence provided by the FBI was used in an Indonesian court in the trial of a terrorist suspect linked to the 2003 Marriot bombing in Jakarta. The suspect was later convicted.

